



PEQUOT TRAILS

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY IN THE SPRING, SUMMER, FALL AND WINTER
BY THE PEQUOT-SEPOS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

Volume III

Spring, 1951

Number 1

Telford H. Work to Conclude Screen Tour Series



Dr. Telford H. Work of California will close the current Audubon Screen Tour Series on Friday evening, April 13, in the Ward Senior High School, Westerly, R. I. He will present his latest all-color motion picture titled, "Arctic to the Tropics."

When Dr. Work began his college education at Stanford University, the San Francisco bay region became the center of his serious study of ornithology. He achieved distinction through his photographic studies of the California Condor, one of the rarest birds in North America. To help pay for his education, he worked as a wildlife photographer in Yosemite National Park during three summer vacations. During the last war, Dr. Work served as a medical officer for the U. S. Navy.

"Arctic to the Tropics" is an Audubon Screen Tour that ranges from Spitsbergen, seven hundred miles from the North Pole, to the startling contrasts of the Fiji Islands. With color motion picture camera, Dr. Work has filmed some of the fascinating and unusual wildlife of the world, from Lapland and the British bird island of Skokholm through the temperate zone to the tropical islands of the Southwest Pacific.

Starting time—8:00 p.m.

Open House Scheduled for May 20

May 20 will be "open house" at the Sanctuary. On this date the Trailside Museum, the Nature Trails, and the Forestry Demonstration Area will officially open for the summer season. Plans and preparations are now under way to make this the grandest day in the Sanctuary's history. The Sanctuary will be open to everyone so plan now to bring your friends and neighbors and join in the fun, fellowship, and refreshments.

Many new and attractive exhibits are being made for the Museum. The Nature Trail will have new signs and labels and be more attractive than ever. Our Forestry Area will be open and our forester, Coert du Bois, will be glad to explain his pet conservation project. There will be new trails to hike on, thanks to our good friend Ben Utter, who has continued to keep our old trails clear and still find time to cut several new ones. You will also find a Trading Post in the museum where you can purchase bird boxes, stationery, post cards, books, etc.

This will be an enlightening afternoon planned strictly for your enjoyment. Plan now to attend!

Hummingbird Garden

Work has been started on the development of a hummingbird garden adjacent to the workshop and museum. Once the ground is prepared, and new gravel walks and a cedar fence completed, we plan to plant shrubs and flowers especially attractive to hummingbirds such as weigela, cardinal flower, columbine, honeysuckle, jewelweed, Oswego tea, scarlet sage, morning-glories, nasturtium, larkspur and day lilies.

Membership Drive to Open May 10

This year our membership committee is planning an extensive campaign from April 10 until May 1. A similar drive last year was successful in bringing us more than 100 new members. It is hoped that we can do even better with this current endeavor.

An increased membership has several advantages. It enables more and more people to take advantage of our program. It also provides us with increased revenue enabling us to expand our activities.

We sincerely hope that every member will cooperate with our committee in this endeavor. You can do so by asking your friends and neighbors to join and share in the joys of membership.

Buy Your Bird Boxes From The Sanctuary

Every spring we get numerous calls asking where good bird boxes can be obtained. This year we have the answer. Exceptionally fine bird boxes can be purchased right here at the Sanctuary.

All the boxes we are offering for sale were made at the Sanctuary. They are made of ¾-inch western cedar and put together with rust-proof hardware. They can be had in natural wood finish (so you can do your own staining or painting) or they can be had in a stained finish. Each box is designed for a specific species, has proper ventilation and drainage, can be opened easily for cleaning, and is weather-proof. You can't buy a better box anywhere for the price we are asking. Help the birds and your Sanctuary!

We offer the following boxes for sale here at the Sanctuary. Phone in your order (Mystic 1260) or drop us a post card and you can pick your boxes up in a few days. Sorry, no mail orders.

Wren box	\$3.50
Bluebird or Tree Swallow box	\$3.50
Flicker box	\$5.00

PEQUOT TRAILS

Published quarterly, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, by the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc., Mystic, Conn.

Editors

Mrs. Arthur M. Cottrell, Jr. and
Thomas P. McElroy, Jr.

A Statement of Purpose:

We want this publication to be of the utmost service to you—to keep you informed concerning activities at the Sanctuary and in your community; to invite your participation in these activities; and to provide you with general articles of education and inspiration regarding conservation subjects. Won't you drop us a line and tell us what you would like to see published? We would appreciate it.

Needed! A Universal Conservation Policy!

AN EDITORIAL

by Thomas P. McElroy, Jr.

One of our nation's most urgent needs is a sound universal conservation policy—a policy that every federal and state agency, all volunteer conservation groups, and every individual can follow toward the preservation and restoration of our natural resources. The formation of such a policy would not be easy. It cannot be born of politics or of selfish commercial interests. It would have to consider all the interrelated phases of nature as well as man's continued efforts to change these relationships for his own benefit.

The Corps of Engineers cannot think entirely of flood control when they build a huge dam across one of our great rivers; the Bureau of Reclamation cannot achieve its goal of cheap electrical power and greater navigation assets without considering the Department of Agriculture's need for irrigation, soil erosion, and reforestation. Any adopted conservation policy, will of necessity, have to be based on the preservation and restoration of those fundamentals necessary to maintain human life—soil, plant life, wildlife and water. Even though reclamation efforts begin at the very source of trouble, they cannot be efficiently applied without giving consideration to the fact that man has so altered the face of our continent with highways, industrial establishments, and cities, that great engineering endeavors are also necessary to preserve property and human life.

The adoption of a universal conservation policy would also aid our country tremendously by providing a sound basis for extensive conservation education. Every citizen of our country should have an understanding of those elements and processes necessary to maintain his own life. We are fast approaching the day when we will have to realize that conservation is just as essential in our educational plans as

reading, writing, and arithmetic. What good are the latter three if we let our whole standard of living crumble under us?

The Life Story of an Eel

by Pauline H. Dederer

On a zoological collecting trip along the Eastern Point shore one day in early spring, we discovered several tiny transparent fish caught in our collecting nets. They were about two inches long and cylindrical, their only visible structures being two dark dots—the eyes. Exploration of the salt marshes nearby revealed numbers of these wraith-like creatures swimming up the narrow channels in the grass and away from the sea. We were surprised to learn that these were the young of eels, which make their way in swarms up into the various rivers of our eastern shore, wriggling over grass on rainy nights, finally reaching the land-locked lakes and ponds in which they mature.

Speculation as to the origin of eels dates back to Aristotle, who believed that eels have no sexes or eggs and arise spontaneously from the sea. Not until 1925 did anyone ever see the egg of an eel and watch its development. The discovery came as a sort of by-product of scientific research by Dr. William Beebe and his staff, when, aboard the yacht *Arcturus*, they were studying the fauna of the famed Sargasso Sea in mid-Atlantic.

So let us join the deep-sea exploring expedition and watch the dredges go down to scoop up quantities of the surface life of the sea. The expert on fishes examines a drop of this oozy "sea-soup" or plankton under a microscope and amid a welter of myriad sea creatures selects a smaller-than-pinhead dot for study. Ask the expert for a microscope and one of those tiny dots of living stuff. Then after a few days of more or less constant study you may observe, as did Marie Poland, the tiny dot actually transform into a larval eel.

This discovery shows the importance of being in the right place at the right time. The right place—and the only place—to answer this question about eels, is in mid-Atlantic, the only region where our eels breed. Thus, with a few accessories, like microscope, a yacht, patience, scientific training—and immunity from mal-de-mer, the question that perplexed Aristotle is answered. Simple enough!

On later expeditions more eel eggs were found and motion pictures were taken showing the sequence of development from egg to larva. Connecticut College is fortunate in having a copy of this film. How the larvae change into young eels or elvers that appear along our shores, and the course of their journey from mid-Atlantic, was de-

scribed by Dr. Johannes Schmidt of Denmark, and published just before the *Arcturus* expedition set out. But neither he nor anyone else then knew where the larvae came from.

You will see a gap in our story. To complete the cycle mature eels migrate from inland waters to the sea, there to breed and to die immediately after spawning.

Bird Notes

EVENING GROSBELLS and RED-POLLS were not reported from any local feeding stations this year.

A MOCKINGBIRD is spending the winter in the vicinity of Grove Ave. in Mystic.

Single male CARDINALS have been observed wintering in Stonington and Weekapaug.

A WILSON'S SNIPES has been reported several times this winter by Mr. Robert Logan of New London.

A ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEL visited the feeding station of Mr. R. O. Erisman several days this winter.

A BROWN THRASHER and a pair of CATBIRDS spent the winter at the Sanctuary.

Several TOWHEES have been reported wintering locally.

A SNOWY OWL spent the winter in New London. He was usually observed while sitting on someone's television aerial.

A female BALTIMORE ORIOLE also liked Mystic well enough to winter here.

The RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS arrived at the Sanctuary in considerable numbers on March 1—about a week later than last year.

BLUEBIRDS have started nesting.

Napatree Point Field Trip

Napatree Point, the long sandy beach extending into the bay from Watch Hill, has always been a fascinating place to observe shore birds. Here such interesting species as the piping plover, ruddy turnstone, sandpipers, sanderlings, terns, and many others can be observed in abundance. This year we are including it on our spring list of field trips.

The field trip, for adults only, will be held on Sunday morning, May 27. Starting time for the trip will be 8:00 a.m. from the Watch Hill Yacht Club on the beach (not the Club docks on the Westerly-Watch Hill road.) This will be a three-mile hike on dry beach sand. Also, it's apt to be cool and breezy so bring along an extra jacket—the kind with a sandwich in the pocket. The trip will be planned so as to permit everyone to get home in time for his Sunday dinner.

Book Review

Land, Water, and People

by Bernard Frank and Anthony Netboy

Rarely do we find a book that deals intelligently with a subject that affects the daily lives of every American—such a book is **Land, Water, and People**. Bernard Frank and Anthony Netboy take a very practical approach to the intricately involved problem of watershed management, flood control, soil erosion, reforestation, wildlife preservation, and similar biologically related subjects.

The book is matter of fact. It tells directly what man has done in the way of spoiling his natural heritage of our land's resources. It also tells of the successes and failures in the meager attempts being made toward the great problem of reclamation. Even more important, the book ends with a startling revelation of what must be done if we as a nation are to long endure with our present standard of living.

Land, Water, and People is a book that needed writing—it is a book that needs reading by everyone because it treats of a subject that will, for better or worse, affect the lives of everyone within this generation and generations to come.

Saturday Morning Nature Hour for Children

A new addition to our summer program will be a Saturday Morning Nature Hour for children. All children between the ages of 10 and 15 are eligible to attend. These Nature Hour programs will be held on three successive Saturdays—June 9, 16, and 23. Plan now to have your children attend these sessions. They will have fun and at the same time learn a lot about the ways of nature.

Order Your Bird Boxes

Now

All boxes made of western cedar. Boxes are of the same design as those used in the Sanctuary.

Wren Box	\$3.50
Bluebird or Tree Swallow	\$3.50
Flicker	\$5.00

Phone Mystic 1260

Sanctuary to Sponsor Bird Identification Course

A new addition to our educational program will be the sponsoring of a bird identification course for adults to be held in the Mystic Community Center. The course will consist of four evening sessions (7:30 to 9:00) and one field trip. The evening sessions will be held on Wednesdays, April 18, April 25, May 2, and May 9. The field trip is tentatively scheduled for Sunday morning, May 13 at 7:00 a.m.

The course will be open to all adults whether they are members of the Sanctuary or not. Local Scout Troops that have boys nearing the rank of Eagle

Scout, who need help with their Bird Study Merit Badge, will be invited to send such Scouts to the course. A registration fee of \$1.00 will be charged in order to help defray the costs of slides and pictures that will be used. If interest warrants, a similar course will be planned for children.

The number of registrants will be limited so if you are interested in attending the course, we suggest that you register now. Just mail your name and address to the Sanctuary and enclose your dollar registration fee. Use the attached coupon if you wish.

Please enroll me in the bird identification course to be held at the Mystic Community Center.

☐ \$1.00 registration fee will be paid at first session.

☐ \$1.00 registration fee enclosed.

Name

Address

Calendar of Coming Events

April 9—Quarterly Trustees Meeting.

April 10—Membership Drive Opens.

April 13—Audubon Screen Tour, Telford H. Work, Ward Senior High School, Westerly.

April 18—First Session, Bird Identification Course, Mystic Community Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m.

April 25—Second Session, Bird Identification Course, Mystic Community Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m.

May 2—Third Session, Bird Identification Course, Mystic Community Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m.

May 9—Fourth Session, Bird Identification Course, Mystic Community Center, 7:30-9:00 p.m.

May 13—7:00 a.m. Field Trip at Sanctuary (Course members only.)

May 13—2:00 p.m. Field Trip at Sanctuary. (Children and adults.)

May 20—Open House at the Sanctuary. (See separate article.)

May 27—Field Trip—Napatree Point. (Adults only.) (See separate article.)

June 3—Wild Flower Field Trip at the Sanctuary, 2:30 p.m., Russell Waldo, Leader.

June 9—Saturday Morning Nature Hour.

June 16—Saturday Morning Nature Hour.

June 23—Saturday Morning Nature Hour.

Farmers' Corner

Conservation Builds Up Profits

How farming with special attention to grass and forage pays its way is indicated by a study of records of Illinois farms, as reported by E. L. Sauer of the Soil Conservation Service who co-operated with the University of Illinois in several studies.

In McLean county, farms were scored for their adoption of soil conservation practices. Then 20 pairs of matched farms, each with a high-score and low-score farm represented, were compared on the basis of farm records covering 10 years.

At the opening of the period the high-score farms showed a net income advantage of only 75 cents an acre. By the middle of the 10-year period this had increased to \$2.32 an acre in favor of the high-score farms. And for the final years this advantage had more than doubled, rising to \$5.08 an acre of increased net income. "This 10-year summary," says Sauer, "shows the cumulative effects of the benefits from a conservation program." By the end of the 10 years of this cumulative effect, the average corn yield on the high-score farms was 7 bushels to the acre more than on the low-score farms. Sauer emphasizes that the differences between the two groups of farms "are continuing to widen."

Another study included a group of farms in northeastern Illinois compared on the basis of the proportion of land in hay and pasture. The 31 farms with the highest percentage (29 percent) of tillable land in grass had 45 percent in corn and soybeans. Another group of 31 farms had only 15 percent in grass and 63 percent in corn and soybeans. The high-grass group had a 4-bushel advantage in yields of corn and oats. Soybean yields were about the same. On the short period included in this study the farms with more grass had only a small advantage of 94 cents an acre in net income. "But," says Sauer, "this will increase over the years, since the programs on these farms are just getting started. Productivity of the soil is being better maintained by the growing of more hay, pasture, and livestock."

Sauer reports other studies pointing the same way. He offers the results to bankers as indications that gains to be expected are a sound basis for credit likely to be needed to finance conservation programs. A desirable feature of such loans would be to schedule light payments on principal the early years, increasing as results increase the income.

We are planning to continue our planting program this spring. We are particularly interested in evergreens, mulberry and dogwood trees, and berry-bearing shrubs. All such contributions will be gratefully received.

It's Time to Put Up Your Bird Houses

Bluebirds are looking for a place to nest. Now's the time to clean and repair your old boxes and put them up in your favorite spot. Whether you buy or build your own boxes, here are a few suggestions that you should remember:

Purchase wooden boxes only. Avoid metal, roofing paper, and other materials that are apt to "bake" the nestlings during hot weather.

Make sure all boxes have provisions for drainage and ventilation.

Don't go in for bright colors. Use a dull gray, green, or brown.

Don't overcrowd your garden with boxes. Most birds don't like to nest near other birds of the same species. Put up one or two boxes for each kind you hope to attract.

Put your boxes on a post or pole in the open. Avoid dense trees and shrubs.

Never build a box with more than one compartment, except for martins.

Clean your boxes thoroughly after each brood. Old nests often harbor parasites that prey on nestlings.

For a thrilling two weeks vacation attend the Audubon Nature Camp in Maine. Complete details can be had by writing the National Audubon Society, 1000 Fifth Ave., New York.

Our Goal — 150 New Members by May 1

Here's How You Can Help

All the members of our special membership committee have agreed to enroll at least three new members. We wish every member could do the same. However, we are asking you to help by getting us just **ONE** new member. Use the following application blank.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary *Mystic, Connecticut*

Date

Please enroll me as a member of the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary for the year ending June 30, 19..... I enclose payment for the class of membership checked below.

() *Regular*, \$3.00 annually () *Contributing*, \$10.00 annually () *Sustaining*, \$25.00 annually
() *Patron*, \$50.00 annually () *Life*, \$100.00

Signed Mr.
Mrs.
Miss

Address

Please make checks payable to "P.S.W.S. Inc." and mail to The Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary, Mystic, Connecticut